

HealthierUS School Challenge

Recognizing Excellence in Nutrition and Physical Activity



A guide to help Arizona schools take the Challenge
and go for the **GOLD!**



Arizona Department of Education

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What is the HealthierUS School Challenge?

The Epidemic

Obesity has become a global epidemic and our children are at great risk for developing this condition. Currently, one in three US children are overweight or obese. A child with obesity is at a much higher risk for developing chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure and cancer. Schools are on the front lines in the battle against obesity. By teaching proper nutrition and physical education, schools provide children with the tools necessary to develop healthy, lifelong habits.

In 2004, The USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) established the **HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSSC)** to encourage elementary schools to implement nutrition education, improve the quality of foods served and promote physical activity. Since then 632 schools have been certified as one of the four levels of superior performance: **Bronze**, Silver, **Gold** or **Gold of Distinction**.

Currently

First Lady Michelle Obama has taken a vested interest in the health of our nation and particularly the HealthierUS School Challenge. In February 2010 the First Lady launched her "Let's Move!" Campaign, which incorporates the Healthier US School challenge (HUSSC). HUSSC is now available to middle and high schools and monetary incentives are available for each award level. Mrs. Obama encourages more schools to join and hints that she may come to visit those schools that accept the challenge.

Recognition

Award-winning schools are recognized with a framed certificate and award banner from USDA, their award listed on the Team Nutrition website, as well as monetary awards of: \$2000 for the **Gold of Distinction** award, \$1500 for the **Gold** award, \$1000 for the **Silver** award, and \$500 for the **Bronze** award. Awards are certified for four years, from the date of approval.

How it Works

The HealthierUS School Challenge is open to any elementary, middle or high school that meets the following criteria:

- Enrolled as a Team Nutrition School.
- Offers reimbursable lunches that demonstrate healthy menu planning practices and principles of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and that meet USDA nutrition standards. School Districts must have had a School Meals Initiative (SMI) review within 5 years and all corrective actions must be completed.
- Provides nutrition education to students.
- Provides students with physical education and the opportunity for physical activity.
- Maintains an Average Daily Participation of school enrollment for reimbursable lunches of:
 - Any for **Bronze** and 60% for **Silver** and 70% for **Gold and Gold of Distinction** for elementary and middle schools.
 - Any for **Bronze**, 45% for **Silver** and 65% for **Gold and Gold of Distinction** for high schools.
- Adheres to guidelines established by FNS for foods served/sold in schools outside of the National School Lunch Program.

Becoming a Team Nutrition School

In order to be eligible to apply for the HUSSC, your school must enroll as a Team Nutrition School.

To enroll go to: <http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/team.html>

1. Check to see if your school is already enrolled
 - Click Schools Database
 - Click Search Page
 - Search for your school
2. If not enrolled, use the form provided in Appendix A or click the enrollment form
 - Print and complete the form AND
 - Fax it to: 703-305-2549 OR
 - Mail it to:
Team Nutrition
3101 Park Center Drive, Room 632
Alexandria, VA 22302
 - Send a copy to your food service director

Menu Criteria

Vegetables!



For each award level, the following criteria must be met:

A **different** vegetable must be served every day of the week. Each serving must be **at least** 1/4 cup.

Of these five, **dark green** or **orange** vegetables must be offered 3 or more times per week. Of these 3, at least 2 must be different.

Cooked dry beans or peas (legumes) must be offered each week. This includes canned dry beans and peas.

See the following page for guidance on **dark green** and **orange** vegetables and dry beans and peas.



Guidance on Dark Green and Orange Vegetables and Dry Beans and Peas for *HUSSC*

The basic *HUSSC* vegetable criteria is to offer a different vegetable each day with all servings at least $\frac{1}{4}$ cup serving size. Vegetables from any group may be offered to meet these criteria. Any vegetable or 100% vegetable juice counts in the vegetable group in MyPyramid. Vegetables are organized into subgroups, based on their nutrient content.

The following are the only foods that meet the *HUSSC* criteria for dark green or orange vegetables and dry beans and peas (including those peas and beans listed on pages 1-5 through 1-12 and on page 1-40 in the USDA Food Buying Guide).

Dark green and orange vegetables: Offer dark green or orange vegetables on 3 or more days per week. Of the 3, at least 2 must be different. At least $\frac{1}{4}$ cup serving size.

Acorn squash	Collard greens	Kale	Spinach
Beet greens	Dark green leafy lettuce	Mesclun	Sweet potatoes
Bok choy	Endive	Mustard greens	Swiss chard
Broccoli	Escarole	Pumpkin	Turnip greens
Butternut squash	Hubbard squash	Romaine lettuce	Watercress
Carrots			

Dry beans and peas*: Offer at least 1 serving per week. At least $\frac{1}{4}$ cup serving size.

Black beans	Great Northern beans	Lima beans, mature	Pinto beans
Black-eyed peas, mature	Kidney beans	Navy (Pea) beans	Red beans
Garbanzo beans (chickpeas)	Lentils	Pink beans	Soybeans, mature
			Split peas

* Mature dry beans and peas are creditable in food-based menu planning as either a vegetable or meat/meat alternate component, but not as both components in the same meal. Dry refers to the bean being harvested dry, not to the purchase form of the bean. Many canned beans and peas are actually dry beans and peas that have been cooked and canned. Any fresh or frozen bean or pea does not qualify.

Menu Criteria

Fruits!

For each award level, the following criteria must be met:

A **different** fruit must be served every day of the week. This includes fresh, frozen, canned, dried or 100% juice.

- Dried fruit must have no added sweetener.
- Canned fruit must be packed in juice or light syrup.
- 100% juice can be counted as a fruit only once per week.
- All servings must be **at least** 1/4 cup.



Gold and **Gold of Distinction** Standard:

Fruit must be served fresh 2 days per week.

Bronze and **Silver** Standard:

Fruit must be served fresh 1 day per week.

Milk!



For each award level:

Only low fat (1% or less) and fat-free (skim) fluid milk, flavored or unflavored, must be offered each day.

Menu Criteria

Whole Grains!

A serving size of whole grain food is equal to a serving of Grains/Breads as defined in the Food Buying Guide, pages 3.15-3.16. The majority of whole-grain food products served must have the whole-grain listed first in the ingredient statement. Other whole-grain servings must have whole grain as the primary ingredient.

Gold & Gold of Distinction Standard:

At least 1 serving of whole-grain food offered **every day** and not the same one each day.



Bronze and Silver Standard:

At least 1 serving of whole-grain food offered **3 or more days** per week and not the same one each day.

Whole Grain Resource

The following resource created by the FNS offers additional background information to help School Food Authorities identify whole-grain products and offer them more frequently on their menus. This information is based on the 2005 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, which recommends that children and adults consume at least half of their grains as whole grains.

How Can Schools Comply with the HUSC Whole Grain Criteria?

FNS realizes that some schools may face challenges in finding products which meet the criteria above. Menu planners should count whole grains to meet the criteria as follows:

1. For a Bronze or Silver Award, a whole grain food must be offered at least 3 days per week. For Gold or Gold Award of Distinction, a whole grain food must be offered every day. Menu planners are encouraged to serve a variety of whole grain foods and may not serve the same whole grain product every day to count for the HUSC criteria.
2. Whole grain food products must be at least the portion size of one Grains/Breads serving as defined in the *USDA Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs*.
3. Whole grain foods that meet the HUSC criteria are categorized into two groups:

Group A: Food products with whole grain(s) as the primary ingredient by weight.

Group B: Food products with whole grain(s) as the primary *grain* ingredient by weight.

When a school-made recipe contains multiple whole grains, it will qualify under Group A if the total weight of the whole grains is more than the weight of any other ingredient. A recipe will qualify under Group B if the total weight of whole grains is more than the weight of the primary grain ingredient. The same principle applies to purchased products that contain multiple grains. Use Attachment B for required documentation for multiple grain products.

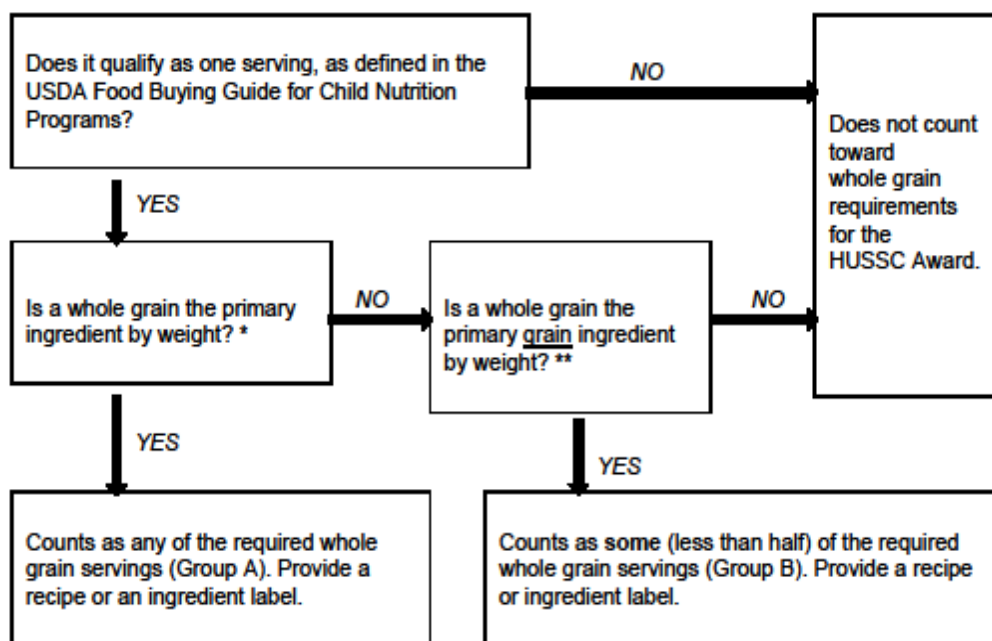


4. Whole grain products from Group A must be the majority of whole grain foods offered each week. For example, for a Gold/Gold Award of Distinction award, a food product meeting Group A would need to be offered three or more days each week and for a Bronze/Silver award, two or more days each week. A whole grain food from Group B may be counted as a whole grain food for the remainder of the days in each week. Foods from Group A may be used to meet all the required Grains/Breads.

How Do I Know If a Whole Grain Product Meets HUSCC Criteria?

There are many foods labeled as whole grains, such as pizza crusts, buns, breads, tortillas, and other products. It is helpful to know which products meet the HUSCC criteria. The chart below will assist you in determining if your whole grain product meets the HUSCC criteria.

HealthierUS School Challenge Criteria for Whole Grain Products



* Includes products with a total whole grain weight that exceeds the weight of any other ingredient.

** Includes products with a total whole grain weight that exceeds the weight of the primary refined grain ingredient.

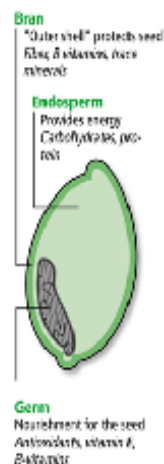
What is a Whole Grain?

Whole Grains consist of the entire cereal grain seed or kernel. The kernel has three parts—the bran, the germ, and the endosperm. Usually the kernel is cracked, crushed, or flaked during the milling process. If the finished product retains the same relative proportions of bran, germ, and endosperm as the original grain, it is considered a whole grain.

When you see the following wording, you will know that, by regulation (FDA Standards of Identity), they describe whole grains that are used as ingredients:

- Cracked wheat
- Crushed wheat
- Whole wheat flour
- Graham flour
- Entire wheat flour
- Bromated whole wheat flour
- Whole durum wheat flour

Whole grain kernel



Common and usual names for other whole grains are noted below:

- The word *whole* listed before a grain, for example, *whole corn*.
- The words *berries* and *groats* are also used to designate whole grains, for example, wheat berries or oat groats.
- Rolled oats and oatmeal (including old-fashioned, quick-cooking, and instant oatmeal).
- Other whole grain products that do not use the word "whole" in their description, for example, brown rice, brown rice flour, or wild rice.

A more comprehensive list of whole grains is provided as Attachment A.

Grain products (ingredients) that are not whole grains:

Flour has been designated by the FDA as the term for refined wheat flour. The following ingredients are not whole grains:

flour
white flour
wheat flour
all-purpose flour
unbleached flour
bromated flour
enriched bromated flour
enriched flour
instantized flour

phosphated flour
self-rising flour
self-rising wheat flour
enriched self-rising flour
bread flour
cake flour
durum flour
corn grits

hominy grits
hominy
farina
semolina
degerminated corn meal
enriched rice
rice flour
couscous

Grain products that may or may not be whole grain:

- “Pot” or “Scotch” barley and “pearl” or “pearled” barley are *not* whole grains because bran has been removed. Look for the words whole barley or whole grain barley on the product label or in the ingredient statement. However, the FDA has recognized that “dehulled barley” is a whole grain.
- “Stone ground” does not necessarily mean that the product is whole grain. “Stone ground” describes the process used for making the flour or meal. Look for “whole” in combination with “stone ground” in the ingredient statement.
- Whole corn “treated with lime” (often used in tortilla products, and may be called “masa”) would only be a whole grain if documentation from the manufacturer indicates that the manufacturing process used to prepare the corn with lime retains the pericarp, or bran layer.
- When a grain name, such as corn, oats, or rye flour is listed in the ingredient statement, but no descriptor (such as “whole grain” for corn or “brown” for rice) is listed, the SFA needs to obtain further documentation from the manufacturer before purchasing the food product to meet the HUSSC criteria.

How Do I Purchase Whole Grain Products or Develop Whole Grain Product Descriptions (Specifications)?

Use the following information to guide your decisions.

- A. **Whole grains as the primary ingredient by weight of the product.** Specify that a whole grain will be the first ingredient on the ingredient label or the primary ingredient by weight. Ask that food product labels and ingredient statements be submitted with the vendor’s bid on whole grain products. If the first ingredient is not a whole grain, and there are multiple whole grains in the ingredient list, request documentation from the manufacturer as to the weight of the first ingredient and the total weight of all of the whole grain ingredients. If the total weight of the whole grain ingredients is greater than the weight of the first ingredient, the food product would meet Group A.
- B. **Whole grains as the primary *grain* ingredients of the product.** Specify that a whole grain be the first grain ingredient of the product. Ask that food product labels and ingredient statements be submitted with the vendor’s bid on whole grain products. If the first grain ingredient is not a whole grain but there are multiple whole grain ingredients in the product, require the manufacturer to complete a product formulation statement documenting the weight of the first (refined) grain ingredient and the total weight of the whole grains. If the total weight of the whole grain ingredients is greater than the weight of the first grain ingredient, the food product would meet Group B.
 - **Flour blends of whole grain and enriched flours** -- Some manufacturers make products using a specialty blend of two or more flours that is part whole grain and part refined flour. In this case, the manufacturer must provide documentation to show that the primary grains in the product are whole grains to meet Group B.

Regardless of the type of whole grain food purchased, ensure in your specification that the serving size of the whole grain food is equal to a serving of Grains/Bread as defined in the Food Buying Guide, pages 3.15-3.16.

Looking at the Whole Product:

Before purchasing new products containing whole grains, look carefully at the whole product, not just the whole grains. In keeping with the 2005 DGA recommendations, SFAs should offer whole grain products that are low in sugars and/or fat. The goal is to offer nutritious whole grain foods that students can enjoy. Including a dessert, on a limited basis as an element of a reimbursable meal can have the positive effect of increasing acceptance and encouraging children to more fully participate in the meal service. We do not support using dessert items to meet the bread requirement in every meal, but we do acknowledge the benefit on occasion.

Storing Whole Grains:

As with all foods, use FIFO (First In, First Out) principles when storing whole grains. Because whole grain ingredients (e.g., whole wheat flour, brown rice) retain the bran and the oil-rich germ, these items may turn rancid when stored in warm food storage areas. To increase the shelf life, store these products in a cool, dry place in air tight containers. If the whole grain products will not be used within a short period of time, they should be stored in the refrigerator or freezer.

Taste-testing of Whole Grain Products:

Some students may not be familiar with whole grain products. To encourage them to try different products, schools can have student taste tests to select products which have the most student appeal. By documenting the taste tests and student preferences, SFAs may develop a list of approved whole grain products for purchase.

Introduce whole grains in student favorites, such as pizza or spaghetti, and gradually increase the amount of whole grains in recipes over the school year as students adapt to the changes.

Ideas for Adding Whole Grains to Menus in Child Nutrition Programs:

Whole grain ready-to-eat cereals	Whole grain crackers or cookies
Whole grain cooked breakfast cereals	Whole grain side dishes e.g., brown rice,
Granola made from whole grains	wild rice, cracked wheat, whole grain
Whole grain cereal or granola bars	bulgur or barley, whole specialty grains
Whole grain pancakes or waffles	Whole wheat pasta, such as macaroni,
Whole grain bagels or muffins	spaghetti, vermicelli or whole grain noodles
Whole wheat breads, rolls or buns	Whole grain salads (cracked wheat, whole
Other whole grain breads, rolls, or buns	grain bulgur, whole specialty grains)
Whole grain tortillas, taco shells	Other uses of whole grains (soups,
Whole grain chips/pretzels	casseroles, combination dishes)
Whole grain pita pockets	Soba noodles (with whole buckwheat flour as
Whole grain cornbread	primary ingredient)

Attachment A: List of Common Whole Grains

While this list is extensive, it is NOT comprehensive and therefore may not contain all possible representations of whole grain ingredient names on food labels.

WHEAT (RED) – the most common kind of wheat in the U.S.

- wheat berries
- whole grain wheat
- cracked wheat or crushed wheat
- whole wheat flour
- bromated whole wheat flour
- stone ground whole wheat flour
- toasted crushed whole wheat
- whole wheat pastry flour
- graham flour
- entire wheat flour
- whole durum flour
- whole durum wheat flour
- whole wheat flakes
- sprouted wheat
- sprouted wheat berries
- bulgur (cracked wheat)
- whole bulgur
- whole grain bulgur

WHEAT (WHITE)

- whole white wheat
- whole white wheat flour

OATS

- whole oats
- oat groats
- oatmeal or rolled oats
- whole oat flour

BARLEY

- whole barley
- whole grain barley
- whole barley flakes
- whole barley flour
- whole grain barley flour
- dehulled barley
- dehulled barley flour

CORN

- whole corn
- whole corn flour
- whole grain corn flour
- whole grain cornmeal
- whole cornmeal
- whole grain grits

BROWN RICE

- brown rice
- brown rice flour

WILD RICE

- wild rice
- wild rice flour

RYE

- whole rye
- rye berries
- whole rye flour
- whole rye flakes

LESS COMMON GRAINS: to be whole grains, “whole” must be listed before the grain name.

- einkorn
- Kamut®
- emmer (farro)
- teff
- triticale
- spelt
- buckwheat
- amaranth
- sorghum (milo)
- millet
- quinoa

**Attachment B: Documentation for Foods Containing Multiple Whole Grains
for the HealthierUS School Challenge**

Schools should provide this documentation on school letterhead for recipes. Manufacturers should provide this information on company letterhead for commercial products.

School District's or Company's Name _____

Recipe/Product Name _____ Product Code (if applicable) _____

1. Attach copy of recipe or product ingredient statement.
2. **Highlight** or underline all items that are whole grains in the attached recipe or product ingredient statement.
3. Serving size according to the recipe _____ or in grams for product _____
4. Total weight of all whole grain ingredients in the recipe or product _____
5. Weight of primary ingredient in recipe or listed first in ingredient statement _____
(To qualify for Group A: Weight of Item #4 is greater than Item #5.)
6. Weight of primary grain ingredient in recipe or listed first in ingredient statement _____
(To qualify for Group B: Weight of Item #4 is greater than Item #6.)
7. School District or Company representative's signature that all information is accurate:

Printed Name	Signature	Title
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Email	Date	
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Nutrition Education

For Elementary Schools:

For all award levels the following criteria must be met:

- Nutrition Education provided for at least half but no fewer than two of the grade levels in the school. If the school consists of a single grade, nutrition education must be provided to all students in the school.
- Must be part of a structured and systemic unit of instruction, such as MyPyramid lessons from Team Nutrition.
- Involve multiple channels of communication, including the classroom, cafeteria and home/parents.
- Messages are reinforced by prohibiting the use of food as a reward with the exception of school holiday parties.

For Secondary Schools:

- Offered to middle school students in at least one grade level as part of required year round instruction.
- Offered to high school students in 2 courses required for graduation.
- Involve multiple channels of communication, including the classroom, cafeteria and home/parents.
- Messages are reinforced by prohibiting the use of food as a reward with the exception of school holiday parties.



Physical Education/Activity

For Elementary Schools:

Physical education/activity is promoted by:

- Providing structured physical education classes for all full-day students throughout the school year.

Gold of Distinction Standard: A minimum average of 150 minutes/week throughout the school year.

OR

Meet stricter sodium requirements plus a minimum average of 90 minutes/week throughout the school year.



Gold Standard: A minimum average of 90 minutes/week throughout the school year.

Bronze and **Silver** Standard: A minimum average of 45 minutes/week throughout the school year.

- Providing unstructured daily opportunities for physical activity for all full-day students, such as recess.
- Reinforcing physical activity education with messages by neither denying nor requiring physical activity as a means of punishment.

Physical Education

For Secondary Schools:

Physical Education is promoted by:

- Offering structured physical education classes to at least two grades and providing students in all grades opportunities to participate in physical activities throughout the year. This includes intramural/ interscholastic sports or activity clubs.
- Actively promoting participation in physical activities, in and out of school, to all students.
- Reinforcing physical education/activity messages by neither denying nor requiring physical activity as a means of punishment.



Local Wellness Policy

For all award levels the following criteria must be met:

- The School District has developed a **Local Wellness Policy**. A copy of the Local Wellness Policy must be submitted with the application.

A Local Wellness Policy must include:

- Goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities.
- Nutrition guidelines selected by the LEA for all foods available on each school campus.



Above and beyond the criteria for a basic wellness policy, the HUSCC requires that:

- School policies support a wellness environment by promoting primarily nonfood items to be sold through school fundraising activities. However, if food items are sold during the school day, they must meet the guidelines for competitive foods.

Visit www.azed.gov/health-safety/cnp/nslp/Operating/Wellness/Default.asp for tips to help you get started on a wellness policy.

For more information contact:

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602-542-4220

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Competitive Foods

Competitive Foods are defined as any foods or beverages sold in competition with reimbursable meals. This includes ala carte, vending, snack bar, school store, and/or any other food and beverage sales on campus. Seconds or extra sales of entrees offered as part of the day's reimbursable lunches are exempt.

For all award levels, **Competitive Foods** must meet these criteria:

Total Fat: Calories from total fat must be at or below 35% per serving. This excludes nuts, seeds, nut butters and reduced-fat cheese.

Trans fat: Less than 0.5 grams per serving.

Saturated Fat: Calories from saturated fat must be below 10% per serving. This excludes reduced-fat cheese.

Sugar: Total sugar must be at or below 35% by weight, including naturally occurring and added sugars. This excludes fruits, vegetables and milk.

Portion size/Calories: Not to exceed the serving size of the food served in the NSLP; for other items, the package or container is not to exceed 200 calories.

Sodium:

Gold of Distinction Standard: ≤ 200 mg sodium per non-entrée; ≤ 480 mg per entrée.

OR

Physical education is 150 minutes/week for elementary schools.

Gold, Silver and **Bronze** Standard: ≤ 480 mg sodium per non-entrée; ≤ 600 mg per entrée.

Competitive Beverages

For all award levels, **Competitive Beverages** must meet these criteria:

Only the following beverages are allowed:

Milk: Only low-fat (1% or less) and fat-free (skim), flavored or unflavored fluid milk, and/or USDA approved alternative dairy beverages; limit serving to a maximum of 8 fluid ounces.

Fruit and Vegetable Juices: 100% full strength with no sweeteners (nutritive or non-nutritive); limit serving size to maximum of 6 fluid ounces.

Water: unflavored, no sweeteners (nutritive or non-nutritive), noncarbonated, caffeine-free.

If the school sells any **Competitive Foods**, sales must meet the following restricted times and locations:

Gold and Gold of Distinction Standard: The above criteria must apply throughout the school day, including meal periods, throughout the entire campus.

Silver and Bronze Standard: The above criteria applies during meal periods within the food service areas. The foodservice area refers to any area on school premises where program meals are served and/or eaten.

For the competitive foods calculator go to:

<http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/hsmrs/HUSSC/calculator.html>

Average Daily Participation

Schools must maintain an Average Daily Participation of school enrollment for reimbursable lunches of:

- Any for **Bronze** and 60% for Silver and 70% for **Gold and Gold of Distinction** for elementary and middle schools.
- Any for **Bronze**, 45% for Silver and 65% for **Gold and Gold of Distinction** for high schools.

To Calculate Average Daily Participation:

Step One:

Total Meals served in October (F,R,P) = Average Daily Participation (ADP)

Number of operating days in October

Step Two:

ADP X 100 = % of ADP to enrollment

Participants enrolled

Example:

3,347 reimbursable lunches served in October

17 operating days

259 participants enrolled in October

3,347 meals = 196.88 or ~ 197 ADP

17 operating days

197 ADP X100 =

259 participants enrolled

76.1%

Forming a Review Panel

A Review Panel must be formed to review your school's application.

This panel must include:

- School's Foodservice Manager
- School's Team Nutrition Leader (can be the same as the Foodservice Director)
- School's Principal or Administrator
- School District's Foodservice Administrator
- Representative from school's parent organization
- Physical Education/Health Teacher

The panel is responsible for reviewing the application to assure that it is an accurate reflection of the school.



Arizona Schools Have the Edge!



Since the implementation of the Arizona Nutrition Standards (ANS) for grades K-8 and Voluntary Arizona Nutrition Standards (VANS) for grades 9-12, Arizona has higher nutrition standards than other states and many of these standards fulfill requirements of the HealthierUS School Challenge. This gives Arizona schools an edge because they are already one step closer to becoming a **Bronze**, **Silver** or **Gold** School!

The following pages contain charts comparing the similarities between the Arizona Nutrition Standards (required for K-8) and Voluntary Arizona Nutrition Standards (optional for 9-12) with the HealthierUS School Challenge requirements.

	Grade	Arizona Nutrition Standards	HealthierUS School Challenge
NSLP entrees sold a la carte			
Calories from fat	K-8	≤40% of total calories	≤35% of total calories
Calories from Saturated Fat and Sugar	K-8	≤10% of total calories	Saturated: <10% total calories/serving Trans: less than 0.5 grams/serving
Fiber	K-8	≥ 1 gram fiber	Not specified
Portion Size/Calories	K-8	≤ 400 calories per serving entrée item	Not to exceed the serving size of the food served in the NSLP
Sodium	K-8	≤ 800 mg per entrée item	≤ 600 mg for Bronze, Silver and Gold ≤ 480 mg OR physical education is 150 mins/week for elementary schools for Gold of Distinction
Final Preparation	K-8	Cannot be deep-fat fried	Not specified
Competitive Foods:			
Calories from Fat	K-8	≤35% of total calories	≤35% of total calories
Calories from Saturated Fat and Sugar	K-8	≤10% of total calories	Saturated: <10% total calories/serving Trans: less than 0.5 grams/serving
Fiber	K-8	≥ 1 gram	Not specified
Portion Size/Calories	K-8	≤ 400 calories	Not to exceed the serving size of the food served in the NSLP
Sodium	K-8	≤ 800 mg	≤ 600 mg for Bronze, Silver and Gold ≤ 480 mg OR physical education is 150 mins/week for elementary
Final Preparation Method	K-8	No deep-fat fried	Not specified

Competitive Foods:			
Non-Entree			
Calories from Fat	K-8	≤35% of total calories	≤35% of total calories
Calories from Saturated Fat and Trans Fat	K-8	≤10% of total calories	Saturated: ≤10% total calories/serving Trans: less than 0.5 grams/serving
Sugar	K-8	≤35% total sugar by weight	≤35% by weight
Fiber	K-8	≥1 gram	
Calories	K-8	≤300 calories	≤200 calories
Sodium	K-8	≤600 mg	≤480 mg for Bronze, Silver and Gold ≤ 200 mg for Gold of Distinction
Preparation Method	K-8	Cannot be deep-fat fried	Cannot be deep-fat fried
Beverage Standards			
Water	K-8	Only natural or non-caloric sweeteners, caffeine free	Unflavored, no sweeteners (nutritive or non-nutritive) non-carbonated, caffeine free
Juice	Elementary	100% fruit and/or vegetable juice, limit 8 fluid ounces	100% full strength fruit & vegetable juices with no sweeteners (nutritive or non-nutritive), limit 6 fluid ounces
	Middle/Jr High	Not <50% fruit and/or vegetable juice, No sugar added with nutrient values equal to 100% juice, limit 12 fluid ounces	100% full strength fruit & vegetable juices with no sweeteners (nutritive or non-nutritive), limit 6 fluid ounces
Fruit Smoothie (yogurt or ice based)	Elementary	100% fruit juice, Must not exceed 400 calories, Limit 12 ounces	Not allowed
	Middle/Jr high	Not <50% fruit juice, Must not exceed 400 calories	Not allowed
Milk and Alternatives	K-8	Fat free, 1%, 2%, Reduced fat enriched rice, nut or soy milk, Flavored milk may contain no >4g sugar per ounce, Limit 12 fluid ounces	Low fat (1% or less) and fat-free (skim) flavored or unflavored fluid milk, and/or USDA approved alternative dairy beverages, limit serving to maximum of 8 fluid ounces
Sports and electrolyte replacement-drinks	Elementary	Not allowed	Not allowed
	Middle/Jr High	Limit 12 fluid ounces	Not allowed

Grade				Voluntary Arizona Nutrition Stan-	HealthierUS School Challenge
NSLP Entrees served a la carte:					
Portion Size/Calories				9-12 ≤400 calories; Cannot exceed portion size of an NSLP reimbursable entrée	Not to exceed the serving size of the food served in the NSLP
Final Preparation Method				9-12 Cannot be deep-fat fried	Not specified
Total Fat				9-12 ≤30% of total calories	≤35% of total calories
Trans Fat				9-12 Recommend <i>Trans</i> Fat free	≤0.5 g per serving
Sodium				9-12 Recommend ≤2 mg per calorie served	≤ 600 mg for Bronze, Silver and Gold ≤ 480 mg OR physical education is 150 mins/week for elementary schools for Gold of Distinction
Competitive Foods: Entrees				9-12	
Portion size/Calories				9-12 ≤400 calories	Not to exceed the serving size of the food served in the NSLP
Calories from Fat				9-12 ≤35% of total calories	≤35% of total calories
Calories from				9-12 ≤10% of total calories	≤10% of calories per serving
Sugar				9-12 ≤35% of sugar by weight	≤35% of sugar by weight
Fiber				9-12 ≥1 gram	Not Specified
Final Preparation Method				9-12 Cannot be deep-fat fried	Not Specified
Trans Fat				9-12 Recommend Trans Fat free	≤0.5 g per serving
Sodium				9-12 Recommend ≤2 mg per calorie	≤ 600 mg for Bronze, Silver and Gold ≤ 480 mg OR physical education is 150 mins/week for elementary schools for Gold of Distinction
Competitive Foods: Non-Entree				9-12	
Calories				9-12 ≤300 calories	≤200 calories

Calories from Fat	≤35% of total calories	≤35% of total calories
Calories from Saturated Fat	≤10% of total calories	≤10% of calories per serving
Sugar	≤35% of sugar by weight	≤35% of sugar by weight
Fiber	≥1 gram	Not specified
Final Preparation Method	Cannot be deep-fat fried	Not specified
Trans Fat	Recommend Trans Fat free	≤0.5 g per serving
Sodium	Recommend ≤2 mg per calorie	≤480 mg for Bronze, Silver and Gold ≤ 200 mg for Gold of Distinction
Beverage Standards		
Water	May contain natural or non-caloric sweeteners	May not contain flavoring, sweeteners, carbonation, or caffeine
Juice	Must contain no less than 50% fruit and/or vegetable juice up to 16 oz	100% full strength fruit and vegetable juices with no sweeteners up to 8 oz
Fruit Smoothie (yogurt or ice based)	Not <50% fruit or fruit juice Not >400 calories Up to 16 oz	Not allowed
Milk and Alternatives	Fat free, 1%, 2%; Reduced fat enriched rice, nut, or soy milk; Flavored milk may contain not contain >4gm sugar per ounce; Limit 12 fluid ounces	Only fat-free or 1% Flavored or unflavored Up to 8 oz
Sports and electrolyte-replacement drinks	Allowed but may not make up >50% of available beverages Up to 12 fluid ounces	Not allowed
Diet Beverages (including diet sodas)	Limit 20 fluid ounces	Not allowed
Fruit Juice Drinks or Ades	Limit 12 fluid ounces	Not allowed
Tea	Limit 16 ounces	Not allowed

Take the Challenge!

Think your school is ready to take the challenge? Complete the following checklist and you are on your way to the **GOLD!**

Step 1: Review this manual to ensure that you meet all requirements

Step 2: Convene a review panel

Step 3: Complete and print the online application. The application is available online at <http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/hsmrs/HUSSC/>

Step 4: Obtain required signatures

Step 5: Send completed application to :

Thea Lund
Health and Nutrition Services
Arizona Department of Education
1535 W. Jefferson St. Bin #7
Phoenix, AZ 85007



Frequently Asked Questions

Application Procedures

1. Is it possible to apply for the HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSSC) as a district, instead of as an individual school?

Yes, multiple schools can apply under the same district. However, each individual school must submit its own application packet, **except**:

- a) If the same menu and same foods were served throughout the district, the district can submit only one set of 4-week lunch menus, one set of menu worksheets and recipes.
- b) If the same competitive foods and beverages were sold throughout the cafeteria and/or school campus, submit only one set of the Competitive Foods worksheet.
- c) If each individual school follows its district's wellness policy, submit only one School Policies and Practices checklist.

2. If schools apply for a Gold award and do not meet the criteria, but do meet the criteria for the Silver or Bronze, will they be given the HUSSC award for the lower level?

Yes, if they did not meet the Gold of Distinction or Gold requirements, their application would be reviewed against the Silver and Bronze criteria.

3. If my school had a 3-day week scheduled (the minimum), but 1 day was cancelled due to inclement weather, can we still use that week since they had the planned menu?

No, schools should submit 4 consecutive weeks with at least 3 days of served meals each week. If this is not possible due to unusual circumstances, work with your State Agency and Regional Office.

4. How do we demonstrate we have healthy menu planning practices?

Healthy menu planning practices should be implemented throughout the menu. Ideally, entrée choices should appeal to students, incorporate whole-grain products, and offer a variety of fruits and vegetables on the serving line or salad bar. The HUSSC vision supports a goal that every student should have the opportunity to select a reimbursable lunch that meets the HUSSC criteria.

The use of token items, such as a loaf of whole wheat bread/rolls offered at the end of the serving line, but not menued as part of the meal or planning a very small quantity of the HUSSC items with only a few servings being taken by the students does not support the HUSSC vision. A Gold Award of Distinction application must demonstrate that at least 10% of the students take the HUSSC items on a regular basis.

5. How can I find out if my school is already enrolled as a Team Nutrition (TN) School? If my school is not a TN School, how do I apply?

To see if your school is enrolled in Team Nutrition, go to <http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/database.html>. Select the search page hyperlink and enter the school's ZIP Code to determine if the school is listed in the TN School Database.

The TN school enrollment form can be downloaded online and submitted only by mail or fax. Signatures of the principal and foodservice manager are required in order to process the enrollment form.

6. Why must the State Agency child nutrition director sign off on each application?

By signing off on an application, the State director assures USDA that the application has been thoroughly reviewed by the State Agency and that the school is meeting all HUSC criteria and is serving reimbursable meals according to 7 CFR 210.10.

7. Will a school be asked to submit additional documentation after it submitted its application?

Possibly. FNS reserves the right to request additional information to verify that the school: (1) serves reimbursable meals, and (2) meets all HUSC criteria. The menu structure should be fully explained in question 2 on pages 4, 5, 6, and 7 (Lunch Menu Worksheet) of the HUSC applications and should include information on entrée choices, side dish choices, number of choices the student can choose, and how Offer vs. Serve (OVS) is implemented, if applicable. The review process can be significantly delayed if additional information is needed.

8. What information should the production records include?

Production records should be submitted for the 4-week lunch menus for all applications, except the Bronze. They should indicate actual daily meal count (students and adults); menu items (used to meet meal pattern requirements), planned portion size (by age/grade); quantity prepared for each menu item, a la carte items sold (if applicable), and leftovers.

Menu Criteria

9. What is the basis for the menu criteria for school lunches?

The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* serves as the basis for the menu criteria for school lunches. The menu criteria emphasize the same foods that are encouraged in the 2005 *Dietary Guidelines*. Some of these foods include whole grains, dark green and orange vegetables, fruits, dry beans and peas, and low-fat/fat-free milk.

10. Can we provide 2 weeks of menus from one month and then 2 weeks from the next month?

Yes, as long as the weeks are consecutive. The weeks do not have to be confined within the same calendar month.

11. If the menu weeks used are shorter than 5 days, do we still have to meet the same menu criteria as those schools that are using 5 days in the weeks?

Yes. Requirements to meet the menu criteria are not prorated for less than 5 days in the week. Whether you have 3, 4, or 5 days in the week, each day should reflect the menu criteria. For example, if you have a 3-day week for a school that is applying for a *Silver/Bronze* award, they would have to offer whole-grain foods and dark green/orange vegetables all 3 days for that 3-day week. For vegetables and fruits, you must offer a different choice each day.

12. What is meant by the statement that “each child should have the opportunity to select a meal that supports the HealthierUS School Challenge goals”?

Sometimes, the way menus are structured or served can, unknowingly, prevent a child from being able to select all healthful foods included in your meals. This statement is better explained using examples.

Example 1: School XYZ allows students to select only one side dish from the following options: spinach salad, baked beans, and corn. The spinach salad is used to meet the dark green/orange vegetable criteria and the baked beans to meet the weekly dry beans/peas criteria. Since the student can only select one side, he/she would not be able to select both the spinach salad and the baked beans. Because of this, the student would not have the opportunity to select a meal that supports the HUSSC goals.

Example 2: One reimbursable meal serving line offers all the items needed to meet the HUSSC goals and the other reimbursable meal serving line does not. Students are not allowed to cross over from one line to another when selecting food for their meal. In this situation, students have the opportunity to select a HUSSC meal by selecting the meal serving line that offers the HUSSC items.

Example 3: The school offers a “food court” type of meal serving lines. Students can freely move between all lines and select a reimbursable meal. In this situation, students are able to select a HUSSC meal by selecting HUSSC items from any of the serving lines before passing through the point of sale.

While Example 2 and 3 above are currently acceptable, the intent of the HUSSC is that schools should be actively moving toward offering meals that meet HUSSC criteria on all reimbursable meal lines.

Fruits/Vegetables

13. Why is there a requirement to offer dry beans or peas at least once per week?

The *Dietary Guidelines* emphasize more dry beans and peas (legumes) because they provide a broad array of vitamins, minerals, and macronutrients, including those that are nutrients of concern. They are also a great economical source of dietary fiber and plant protein. These products can be purchased in the dry form and cooked at the school, or purchased as canned, precooked. A variety of dry beans/peas are available through the USDA Foods program. They can be served as a meat/meat alternate or as a vegetable, and they may be incorporated into entrees, side dishes, or salad bars. *Note that fresh, canned, or frozen green peas, fresh or frozen soybeans (edamame), and green lima beans, which have a very different nutrition profile, do not count as dry beans or peas.*

14. Why is there a requirement for fresh fruits in the menu criteria?

It is important that menus reflect a variety in the types and forms of fruits that are offered, including fresh fruits. The *Dietary Guidelines* encourages consuming more fruit. Fresh fruits provide fiber and an array of micronutrients including vitamins, minerals, and phytochemicals. Also, schools have opportunities to offer fruit to students throughout the school year that are predominately available fresh, such as apples, melons, bananas, strawberries, kiwi, oranges, and grapes, which increases the number of potential fruit choices.

15. Can 100 percent fruit or vegetable juice count as a serving of fruit or vegetable for HUSSC?

Yes. If the serving size is at least $\frac{1}{4}$ cup, schools may offer 100 percent fruit juice once per week to count toward the HUSSC criteria for fruit. Similarly, 100 percent vegetable juice may count once per week as a vegetable serving. Note that 100 percent fruit or vegetable juice may count toward only half of the total fruit/vegetable requirement in Traditional or Enhanced Food-Based Menu Planning. See the USDA *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs*, page 2-1.

16. What vegetables are counted as “dark green and orange” vegetables? Can we use dark green or orange vegetables that are not on the list?

“Dark Green Vegetables” include dark green leafy vegetables and broccoli. In addition to broccoli, vegetables in this subgroup include spinach, romaine lettuce, collard greens, kale, and turnip greens. Dark green leafy vegetables and broccoli are sources of important vitamins and minerals such as vitamins A, C, and E, folate, calcium, iron, and potassium. Orange vegetables include acorn squash, butternut squash, carrots, hubbard squash, pumpkin, and sweet potatoes. You can only count dark green or orange vegetables that are on the HUSSC list.

17. Can schools offer a salad bar every day of the week to meet the HUSSC criteria for vegetables and fruits?

Yes. Schools that offer salad bars usually offer a variety of vegetables and fruits. As long as the planned serving size is at least $\frac{1}{4}$ cup for each fruit and vegetable selected, and the required number and kind of fruits or vegetables are offered, schools may count the salad bar toward meeting the criteria.

18. If a school is counting fruits and vegetables from a self-serve salad bar where the foods are not pre-portioned, how is it determined if they are meeting the $\frac{1}{4}$ -cup requirement?

The menu planner defines what the typical serving is from the salad bar, based on actual student consumption. The production records show sufficient quantities are planned.

19. What is meant by “a different vegetable every day” or “a different fruit every day”?

In keeping with the *Dietary Guidelines*, HUSSC encourages schools to offer a wide variety of vegetables and fruits, so that a student can select a different one every day, not merely different forms of the same vegetable or fruit. For example, if a school offers mashed potatoes, it cannot also count a serving of potato rounds that same week to meet the HUSSC criteria. Apple slices and applesauce also are considered as the same fruit. Schools that offer a variety of individual fruits or vegetables throughout the week may count a mixture of these as a serving in order to minimize waste.

20. Can baked beans count as both a vegetable serving and the weekly dry bean/pea requirement for the Challenge?

Yes, they can meet the dry bean and pea **and** the vegetable requirement for the HUSSC.

21. When several vegetables or fruits are in one dish (e.g., a California Medley or Fruit Salad), can this dish meet the requirement of the HUSSC vegetable or fruit criteria?

Yes, in dishes such as a California Medley, where more than one vegetable is used, one of the single vegetables in the dish can be used to meet the vegetable criteria for HUSSC. For example, the broccoli in the California Medley would meet the dark green vegetable criteria.

Whole Grains

22. How can I determine if a whole-grain product credits as a serving of grains/breads?

Schools should compare the weight of 1 serving of the grains/breads in ounces or grams with the weights listed in the charts on p. 3-15 and 3-16 in the USDA *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs*.

23. How do you determine if the whole grain is the primary ingredient by weight in a grains/breads product?

A whole grain is the primary ingredient by weight when:

- a) A whole grain is listed first on an ingredient statement, or
- b) In purchased products that contain multiple grains, if the total weight of all the whole-grain ingredients is greater than the weight of the first ingredient listed, then it meets the criteria of whole grains being the primary ingredient by weight.

If a school-made recipe contains multiple whole grains, the total of whole grains must weigh more than any other ingredient.

24. If the grains/breads product contains some whole grain, but whole grain is not the primary ingredient by weight, can I still count the product as a whole grain?

Yes. As long as the product equals 1 grains/breads serving and whole grain(s) is the primary grain ingredient. However, schools must serve a majority of whole-grain products in which whole grain is the primary ingredient by weight. See Question #23.

25. How many times per week must I offer items in which whole grain is the primary ingredient by weight?

To meet the whole-grain criteria, schools which apply for a Gold/Gold of Distinction award must offer products in which whole grain is the primary ingredient at least 3 of the 5 required serving days. For Silver/Bronze award, schools must serve these products at least 2 of the 3 required serving days. For example, brown rice, whole-grain pasta, and oatmeal are considered Group A whole-grain foods, if they meet the serving size requirement. See Question #22.

26. Can I offer the same whole-grain food item each day?

No, at least one of the weekly servings must be a different whole-grain food or product in order to meet the HUSSC criteria. Schools should offer a variety of whole grains each week and over the course of the 4 weeks. Schools will not meet the HUSSC criteria by offering whole-wheat bread as a daily optional whole-grain item. Schools are encouraged to use brown rice, wholegrain pasta, whole cornmeal, oatmeal, or other cooked whole grains to increase the use of whole grains in schools. A variety of whole-grain foods are also available for schools to use through the USDA Foods program (formerly known as Commodity Foods). Various forms of a grain may be counted as different whole-grain foods, such as whole-wheat bread, whole-wheat rolls, and whole-wheat tortillas. Check the whole-grains resources on the HUSSC section of the Team Nutrition Web site.

27. How can my school obtain whole-grain USDA Foods (formerly known as Commodity foods)?

The USDA Foods program, which offers foods to schools, is administered at the State level. The State distributing agency selects food items from the USDA foods available list, those foods that they believe will be most popular in the school/child nutrition programs in their State. If you would like to see more whole-grain product options, please contact your State distributing agency. A list of State contacts can be found at www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/contacts/sdacontacts.htm. A list of foods available can be found at http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/foods/foods_available.htm.

28. Can flax seed count as a whole grain?

No, flax seed is not a grain. Grains are generally the seeds of various grasses. Flax seed is a seed product of a flowering plant, and is not considered a grain product.

29. Can popcorn meet the whole-grain requirement?

No. While popcorn is a whole grain, it is considered a snack food item and is not credited as grains/breads in the USDA *Food Buying Guide*. Popcorn will not count toward the HUSSC whole-grain criteria even if it is served as an extra component of the reimbursable meal.

30. If the ingredient label lists “whole corn treated with lime” as an ingredient, would the whole-corn ingredient still be considered a whole grain?

The product would only be considered a whole grain if the documentation from the manufacturer indicates that the manufacturing process used to prepare the corn with lime retains the pericarp, or bran layer.

Milk

31. Can flavored fluid milk be offered?

Yes. Low-fat (1% or less) and fat-free (skim), flavored or unflavored milk can be offered.

Nutrition Education and Physical Activity

32. What are the nutrition education criteria for elementary schools?

- a) Nutrition education is provided to at least half of the grade levels in the school;
- b) Healthy eating messages and activities are integrated into existing classroom instruction, such as health education, science, language arts, and reading and writing classes. This type of instruction should include the use of *MyPyramid* and *MyPyramid for Kids* lessons, other Team Nutrition materials, or their equivalent. You can download *MyPyramid* lessons at: <http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/mypyramidclassroom.html>.
- c) Nutrition education activities involve the classroom, cafeteria, and home/parents.
- d) Messages are reinforced by prohibiting the use of food as a reward (school holiday parties are excluded).

33. What are the nutrition education criteria for middle and high schools?

- a) Nutrition education is offered to middle school students in at least one grade level as part of required year round instruction.
- b) Nutrition education is offered to high school students in 2 courses required for graduation.
- c) Nutrition education involves multiple channels of communication.
- d) Messages are reinforced by prohibiting the use of food as a reward (school holiday parties are excluded).

34. What are the physical education/activity criteria for elementary schools?

- a) Structured physical education (PE) classes are provided to students throughout the school year. These classes count toward the PE time requirements. Up to 20 minutes (Bronze/Silver) and 45 minutes (Gold/Gold of Distinction) of the PE requirement may be met by providing structured physical activity planned by a certified PE teacher and implemented by a classroom teacher or school administrator. All students must participate in the physical activities which must be at least moderate-intensity and in increments of at least 10 minutes.
- b) In addition, physical activity opportunities are provided daily for students outside of physical education class. For example, regular scheduled recess, physical activity breaks during the school day within the classroom, intramural sports, walk to school program, etc. This does not count toward the time requirements for physical education.
- c) Reinforcing physical activity/education messages by neither denying nor requiring physical activity as a means of punishment.

35. What are the physical education/activity criteria for middle and high schools?

- a) Offer structured physical education classes to at least two grades and provide students in all grades opportunities to participate in physical activity (intramural/interscholastic sports or activity clubs) throughout the school year.
- b) In addition, actively promote participation in physical activities (in and out of school) to all students.
- c) Reinforcing physical activity education messages by neither denying nor requiring physical activity as a means of punishment.

36. If my school's competitive foods meet the stricter sodium requirements for the Gold of Distinction, what level of structured physical education would be required?

For elementary schools, the school would have to provide a minimum average of 90 minutes per week of structured physical education throughout the school year and meet stricter sodium requirements for competitive foods to qualify for the Gold of Distinction Award. If the elementary school provides a minimum average of 150 minutes per week of structured physical education throughout the year, they do not have to meet the stricter sodium requirements to receive a Gold of Distinction award. For secondary schools, the school's competitive foods would only have to meet the stricter sodium requirement for the Gold of Distinction award.

Competitive Foods and Beverages (Including a la Carte and/or Vended Items)

37. What is the basis for the competitive foods criteria?

The HUSSC criteria reflect the recommendations of the 2005 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, and the Institute of Medicine (IOM) published recommendations (April 2007) for foods that should be served in schools outside of the organized school lunch meals. Competitive foods criteria emphasize limiting the intake of foods high in calories, total fat, saturated fat, *trans* fat, added sugars, and sodium.

38. Do these criteria eliminate selling whole milk and 2 percent milk either a la carte and/or through school vending? Why?

Yes. The 2005 *Dietary Guidelines* specifies that Americans (age 2 and older) use fat-free and low-fat milk and milk products.

39. Why was a 200-calorie limit put on portions of items for vended sale?

A 200-calorie limit was placed upon pre-packaged vended or a la carte sales in an effort to control portion size and thus calories. Additionally, schools that prepare foods for a la carte sales are required to limit the portion to the serving size of the food served in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).

40. Can my school offer an entrée as an a la carte item if it is not offered as part of the lunch menu that day?

Yes. However, the entrée would have to meet the HUSSC Competitive Foods criteria. For example, if pizza is sold a la carte, but is not offered as an NSLP entrée on that day, the pizza would have to meet the criteria for fat, *trans* fat, saturated fat, sugar, sodium, and portion size/calories.

41. If my school uses Nutrient Standard Menu Planning (NSMP), what serving sizes do I need to use in order to meet the competitive food portion size criteria?

For NSMP, the serving size is defined by the menu planner based on the planned meal. If a school sells a second entrée a la carte, that entrée is exempt from meeting the competitive foods criteria, and the portion size of the second entrée must be the same or smaller than the serving size offered in the school lunch program. Any a la carte items that are not part of a reimbursable meal must meet the competitive foods criteria.

42. If my school meets all of the Gold award criteria and only sells low-fat or fat-free milk a la carte, does my school qualify for a Gold Award of Distinction?

Yes. By selling only milk a la carte, the school meets the competitive foods criteria of the Gold Award of Distinction award. Schools do not need to meet both the Competitive Foods criteria **and** the higher Physical Education criteria to qualify for the Gold Award of Distinction. Elementary schools that meet the stricter sodium requirement under competitive foods must still provide 90 minutes per week of physical education throughout the school year.

43. Do beverages have to meet the sugar criteria?

No. Only low-fat or fat-free milk, 100 percent juice, and water can be sold as competitive beverages in order to meet any of the HUSSC award levels. These beverages are exempt from the sugar criteria.

44. Does the Gold/Gold Award of Distinction competitive foods criteria address only items sold by the school, or does this include other school-sponsored activity sales?

The Gold/Gold Award of Distinction criteria include all foods and beverages made available at the school, to students on the school campus, and throughout the school day. Examples of food and beverage sales/service that would require meeting the nutrition guidelines or standards are:

- Foods or beverages sold a la carte in the school cafeteria
- Foods or beverages sold in vending machines, school stores, or snack bars operated by the school
- School-sponsored food and beverage sales during the school day

45. Do the foods served at birthday parties or other classroom events have to meet the Challenge criteria?

No. Schools are not expected to monitor what a parent sends to school for a birthday party. However, schools may have policies on birthday parties/classroom events as part of their school wellness policies.

46. Do the food items sold at a fundraiser after school have to meet the competitive foods criteria? Why or why not?

No, the food items sold at an afterschool fundraiser do not have to meet the competitive foods criteria. The competitive foods criteria only apply to school-sponsored foods and beverages sold during the school day. For creative ideas related to fundraising, see the *Healthy Fundraising Tips* resource included in the HUSSC Application Kit.

Participation

47. Why was the elementary school lunch average daily participation (ADP) criteria for elementary schools set at 70 percent for both Gold applications?

Data from the *School Nutrition Dietary Assessment (SNDA) Study II* (July 2001) indicated that the average daily participation, based upon enrollment, of elementary schools randomly selected for this national study was 67 percent. The *SNDA Study III* (November 2007) showed that average daily participation of elementary schools has improved to 73 percent. An elementary school that is being nationally recognized as having an excellent school nutrition program is expected to have an average daily participation rate of at least 70 percent.

48. How was the middle and high school ADP criteria established?

Due to the popularity of the challenge, draft secondary school HUSSC criteria were established in the spring of 2009 by members of the working group that established the elementary school criteria in 2004 and others. Because of the inherent difference between elementary and middle and high schools, the draft secondary school criteria were reviewed by local school food service directors of HUSSC awardees, state agency personnel across the country and regional and national office staff of the Food and Nutrition Service. The criteria established reflect the HUSSC vision of recognizing excellence in nutrition and physical activity.

49. Our school has a low percentage of students approved for free and reduced-price meals, thus our participation is low. Will USDA make allowances for lowering the ADP for such schools?

The ADP criteria apply to all schools regardless of percentage of low-income students. USDA recognizes that many factors may influence ADP rates. In order to address this, there is no ADP criteria for the Bronze level to serve as incentive for schools to begin serving healthier meals that will ultimately lead to higher ADP and the opportunity to achieve a higher level award. Additionally, the ADP for silver level has been eased to 60% for elementary/middle schools and 45% for high schools. USDA believes that any school recognized as having excellence in nutrition should maintain a high school lunch participation rate. Meals that are planned and prepared to meet quality standards should be appealing to all children in the school. For helpful ideas to increase participation, see *Tips for Increasing Participation* included in the HUSSC Application Kit.

50. Do we need to use a specific month for reporting our ADP?

No. You can report your ADP for any month prior to the date the submitted menus are served.

51. In my school, kindergarten students do not stay for lunch. Must I include these students in my enrollment in order to calculate my ADP?

No. If school lunch is not accessible or available for kindergartners, do not count them in the participation data.

Recognition

52. What type of recognition will schools receive if they receive an HUSSC award?

Schools that successfully meet the Challenge will receive a recognition plaque and a banner. In addition, the recognized schools will be listed on the Team Nutrition Web site, and may be chosen to be a part of national FNS media events that recognize schools for their leadership and excellent school meals program. Schools are encouraged to market their success to their community via the newspaper, parent newsletters, etc. and are expected to maintain their high level of excellence throughout the four year certification period.

Recordkeeping/Documentation

53. What kind of recordkeeping and/or documentation is required of schools after they have received certification?

Schools should maintain the HUSSC criteria during the 4-year award period and the school must keep copies of the following documents on file during the certification period:

- Menus served
- Menu documentation (including food production records, Child Nutrition (CN) Labels, Food Product Ingredient Labels, Nutrition Facts Labels, etc.)
- Recipes, if school-made, for products sold/served
- Food Product Ingredient and Nutrition Facts labels for items sold a la carte

54. What is the time period for my award?

Awards are good for a 4-year period, from the date of the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) approval. Before your award expires, you should apply for recertification. If possible, try for the next higher award level.

Team Nutrition School Enrollment Form



Our Team Nutrition School Leader is:

FIRST NAME _____

LAST NAME _____

TITLE _____

SCHOOL'S NAME _____

TOTAL ENROLLMENT _____

GRADES TAUGHT | _____

SCHOOL DISTRICT _____

SCHOOL COUNTY _____

SCHOOL ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

TELEPHONE () _____ FAX () _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

Please check one or more of the appropriate grade ranges:

☐ P (PRESCHOOL) PRE-K

☐ E (ELEMENTARY) K-5/6

☐ M (MIDDLE) 6/7-8

☐ H (HIGH) 9-12

We agree to:

- Support USDA's Team Nutrition goal and values.
- Demonstrate a commitment to help students meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- Designate a Team Nutrition School Leader who will establish a school team.
- Distribute Team Nutrition materials to teachers, students and parents.

- Involve teachers, students, parents, foodservice personnel, and the community in interactive and entertaining nutrition education activities.
- Participate in the National School Lunch Program.
- Demonstrate a well-run Child Nutrition Program.
- Share successful strategies and programs with other schools.

**We certify our school does not have any outstanding overclaims
or significant program violations in our school meals programs.**

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL, PRINTED NAME _____

SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE MANAGER, PRINTED NAME _____

SIGNATURE _____

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

DATE _____

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